

**Sunday, January 2, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Second Sunday after Christmas**

**Bible Study – Jeremiah 31:7-14 & John 1:(1-9), 10-18
“The Light of Home”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants share hopes for the coming year.

Jeremiah 31:7-14. Context. Jeremiah lived during one of the most tumultuous times in the history of Israel: at the time his ministry began, King Josiah had instituted far-ranging reforms in the religious life of Israel, and hopes were high that he might even reunite the northern territories that had been lost to the Assyrians. But Josiah was killed in battle by the Egyptians and things went downhill after that, ending with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Babylonians, the Exile of the people to Babylon and the end of the house of David itself. Jeremiah wept. But he did not give up hope, and as in today’s reading, in that dark hour he prophesied a message of hope for all of Israel. No matter how desperate and tragic the circumstances in which the people found themselves, this would not be the end of the story. God would once again restore the people and the city. God would show mercy to them even as they had experienced judgment.

John 1:1-18. Context. Each of the gospels has its own version of an “introduction:” in Mark, it’s one brief sentence (“The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, Son of God.”); in Matthew and Luke, it’s an extended account of the birth of Jesus; in John, it’s a poetic “prologue” that with its first words – “in the beginning” – echoes the opening of Genesis and signals that the story of the gospel didn’t just start with Jesus’ ministry or even his conception and birth; it has its origins in the very beginning of time and in the eternity of God’s very being. As with the other gospels, this introduction touches on many of the themes the evangelist will elaborate in his account. These themes include Jesus as the Word of God, as the Light and Life of the world, the Word become flesh. These themes are indebted to the understanding of God’s Wisdom that is evidenced in the books of Proverbs, Sirach, and Wisdom.

Read Jeremiah 31:7-14 & John 1:(1-9), 10-18

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Jeremiah 31:7-14 & John 1:(1-9), 10-18 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- How might we be part of the “world” that John mentions in 1:10? How might we be part of the people who did not accept Jesus in 1:11?
- How are we also those who receive and believe in Jesus from 1:12?
- How do we see God’s glory in Jesus?
- How have we received “grace upon grace” (v. 16)?
- How has grace *and* truth come through Jesus (v. 17)?
- How is Jesus the true light of the world (v. 9)?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of life and light, it is through you that we experience grace upon grace. Through your Holy Spirit, may we see the world as you see it. May we continue to desire a home in your righteousness and love. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.